not one day more

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by peacefrog

Summary

They said goodbye in Argentina.

“Six months. No more,” Hannibal said.

A year went by with no word.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

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—

Will settled in the Florida Keys. He kept his hair cropped close and grew his beard to hide his scar. His skin browned in the summer sun, one boat motor after the next coming to life beneath his hands. Fourteen months after Will said goodbye to Hannibal, Jack Crawford came knocking on his door.

“Where is he?”

“I don’t know.”

“But you were with him.”

“Yes. But I haven’t seen him in over a year.” Will invited Jack in and they sat in the kitchen watching the coffee pot sputter. “Are you going to arrest me?”

Jack frowned. “Should I?”

Will pulled his glasses from his shirt pocket and pushed them on before meeting Jack’s eyes. The A/C was busted and sweat trickled down the back of his neck as he poured the coffee into mugs. “Let’s go outside.”

They sat in Will’s overgrown backyard in plastic chairs drinking their coffee hot and black.

“Why didn’t you go home? Did he force you to stay?”

“No.”

“Is he dead?”

“I don’t know. I think he might be.”

Jack stayed until the sun went down. Until he was finished asking questions for which Will had no answers. “I have a room nearby. I don’t think I need to tell you there will be eyes on you 24/7.”

—

Will woke in the middle of the night to a hand pressed over his mouth. He knew who his eyes would find before they fluttered open.

“You must be very quiet,” Hannibal whispered. Will nodded and he pulled his hand away.

In the dim light of the moon filtering through the window, Hannibal was nearly unrecognizable. His hair was long and falling to his shoulders, his beard fuller than Will's own. His clothes were dark and beneath his jacket Will spied a hint of plaid.

"What happened? You said no more than six months," Will croaked, struggling to keep his voice low.

"I'm sorry. I had to be certain I wasn't being followed."

Will gripped the front of Hannibal's jacket, pulling him in until their foreheads knocked together. "You just walked right into their trap."

In the space between them, Hannibal smiled.

—

They tangled together and dozed. Will startled awake at every sound. When day broke, Will dropped the blinds and refused to let Hannibal leave the room.

"I can't risk them seeing you through the window."

"There's one car, as far as I could tell. One man, not terribly alert."

"I don't care. Just… stay. I'll make breakfast."

Breakfast was cold cereal that Will fully expected Hannibal to protest. Instead, he ate in contented silence, milk dripping down into his beard.

"You're wearing flannel," Will said, smiling.

"I am."

"Must have been rough for you out there."

Hannibal let his spoon rattle down into the empty bowl. He swiped a hand across his beard and met Will's gaze. "It was. Without you."

Tears bit Will's vision, their venom running deep. A year's worth of sorrow tunneled to the surface. "I'd accepted that you were dead. You couldn't even—"

"Will."

"Don't."

Will walked from the room and closed the door behind him. He spent the morning out in the yard, dirtying his hands and choking on his anger. In the early afternoon, Jack came by again. Will forced his heart rate down and insisted they talk on the porch.

"I talked to Molly, told her that I found you. She wants you to come home."

Will wiped his dirty hands on his jeans. “It’s not my home anymore. I just want to be left alone.”

“She’s still your wife.”

Will watched the sky over Jack’s shoulder. Storm clouds were rolling in, dark and fat. “Tell her that I’m sorry.”

—

Jack left. The sky poured. The car watching the house didn’t move. Will and Hannibal ate sandwiches sitting cross legged on the bedroom floor.

“Will you come away with me?” Hannibal asked.

“I’ve started to build a life here.”

“You work in a boat yard three days a week. The other four you barely leave the house. No dogs. No friends. Your wife pining away for you back home.”

“You were watching me.”

“Only for as long as I had to.”

“I’m starting to get used to life without you.”

“No you’re not.”

Will shoved their plates out of the way and all but dove into Hannibal’s lap, tugging at his hair and stealing his mouth in a starving kiss. Hannibal’s fingers were rough when they pushed up under Will’s shirt. He smelled of weeks on the road. The flannel he wore was entirely impractical for the weather.

“You were somewhere cold,” Will breathed.

“Yes.”

“Take this off.”

Will tugged at Hannibal’s shirt, their fingers trembling together at the buttons. When finally Will reached skin, he buried his face in the thatch of hair on Hannibal’s chest. Will grew dizzy with the scent of him, clinging to wherever his hands could reach. He threaded fingers up in Hannibal’s hair, trailed fingers along his beard.

“Take me somewhere far away from here,” Will whispered.

Hannibal cradled Will’s face in his hands. “I will.”

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That evening, Will tapped on the window of the patrol car.

“Mr. Graham. How can I help you?”

“I found something strange in the house. Can you come take a look?”

The officer—Davis, according to his name tag—dumped the remnants of his dinner into the paper bag on the passenger seat and stepped out onto the pavement, still damp from the earlier rain. They plodded toward the house, Davis questioning Will unsuspectingly.

“What is it exactly that you found?”

“I’m not sure. Something from Lecter, maybe. It’s sitting out back by the shed.”

They walked through the side gate and into the backyard.

“Over there,” Will pointed to the box—empty, he’d placed it there himself only an hour ago—by the shed, following close behind.

Davis stepped forward for a better look. “Did you look inside?” he asked, turning to Will.

“I’m really sorry about this.”

“What’s that?”

Davis had no chance to react before Hannibal knocked him out cold, a single blow to the head from behind.

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“He’ll live,” Hannibal said, securing Davis’ wrists with his own cuffs and dumping him into the back of his patrol car. “I can change that if you’d like.”

“No. Leave him. We don’t have much time.”

—

It took them two weeks to make it to Alaska. They traveled in bursts by train and stolen car and, finally, their final leg of the journey was spent stowed away on a commercial fishing vessel. They rented a little cabin not far from the sea.

They showered the stink of fish and sweat from their skin. Will ran his fingers through the dampness of Hannibal’s beard when they were finished.

“Are you going to shave?”

“Do you want me to?”

Will pressed his fingers in deep to feel the slope of Hannibal’s face. “No. It’s safer this way, don’t you think?”

“I do.”

All the clothes they'd acquired on their journey were the same. Flannel and jeans and heavy boots. Hannibal dressed in dark blue plaid and twisted his hair up on his head once it was dry. Will couldn't help but stare.

"I can teach you how to fish, if you want."

Hannibal smiled, showing the blunt edges of his teeth. "Alright."

Their bodies slotted together in the middle of their wood paneled kitchen. Their lips met in open, aching honesty. They made love there on the dusty floor, for the first time in fourteen and a half months, and stayed there clinging to one another long after they were finished.

"I won't let you leave me again," Will said, nuzzling into Hannibal's chest.

"Fourteen months is plenty for one lifetime, don't you think?"

Will thought of the years they'd spent apart during Hannibal's imprisonment. He sat up and reached for Hannibal's discarded flannel and slipped it on. "Not one day more," he said, pulling Hannibal close.

End Notes

original prompt here.

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